

U.S.-Indian Diplomatic Rhub

By Conrad Fink

NEW DELHI (AP) — With Russian help, the biggest political rhubarb of U.S.-Indian relations in 1963 finally has been buried.

The Soviet Union has agreed (for a price) to supply a 1000-kilowatt radio transmitter which India will try to use in countering Red China's propaganda in Southeast Asia.

Thus ends the celebrated Voice of America case that touched off angry demonstrations of leftists in India two years ago, annoyed Wash-

ington and, probably, aroused laughter in China.

It started with the China-India border war in 1962 and India's sudden realization of how antiquated its propaganda machine was in comparison with China's.

New Delhi decided to contest Peking's radio propaganda in Southeast Asia, and a search began for a powerful transmitter.

The United States offered one of 1000 kilowatts, ready to be installed in Calcutta to be-

Voice of America Offered a Transmitter With

gin chasing the Chinese off the air waves.

This \$2 million transmitter was to cost India the token price of one rupee (21 cents).

India quickly accepted. Then somebody discovered the Americans had tied a string to the deal.

Voice of America, owner of the transmitter, also had a few things to say to China's listening audience and wanted to use the transmitter three hours daily for five years.

There was an immediate uproar in India.

Communist members of Parliament tried to introduce a no-confidence motion against the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on grounds that the deal compromised India's nonaligned foreign policy. Demonstrators, sometimes 5000 strong, gathered in New Delhi to protest.

Newspapers called the deal a U.S. cold war weapon.

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Strings Attached

Nehru badly wanted that transmitter but he wanted political peace more. So he called off the deal, saying it had been made without his being aware of the details.

For the next two years, India searched for a nonaligned transmitter. Private bids were considered from many countries. But somehow a new deal never shaped up.

Then, the Russians made their offer: 8,434,000 rupees (\$1,771,140), 2.5 per cent an-

nuual interest and repayment in five years for a 1000-kilowatt transmitter. Not exactly a 21-cent deal, but there were no strings attached.

The Russians, with plenty of transmitters capable of reaching Asia, didn't want any air time on the new transmitter. India accepted.

Trouble is, the transmitter isn't expected to begin operating until 1968—which means the Chinese will have had a full five years of unrivaled broadcasting to Southeast Asia since the whole fuss started.